MARVEL
5
MIDNIGHT SUNS
SACKS

CARLOS PACHECO
1961-2022

"My friend Carlos Pacheco was a sweetheart of a guy who loved comics, the Marvel comics that he read as a child most of all. He brought an enthusiasm to his work that went beyond the drive of the professional — he was truly invested in the characters and their fictitious lives. His work combined the dynamics of John Byrne with the realism of Neal Adams, creating a synthesis that captured the essence of American super hero comics — a form that was exotic to Carlos as he first read the translated stories but which he absorbed and came to embody like a native. A citizen of Spain, the Marvel Universe was his true home."

— TOM BREVOORT

"Carlos was a dream collaborator who made every story better with his ideas, his brilliant storytelling and his beautiful art. But more, he was warmhearted, enthusiastic and a wonderful person. I was thrilled to work with him but happier still to have him as a friend. He will be enormously missed."

— KURT BUSIEK

MAGIC USERS ACROSS THE WORLD WERE AFFLICTED BY A TERRIBLE VISION PROPHESIZING A COMING APOCALYPSE INVOLVING **ZOE LAVEAU**. CLEA, THE SORCERER SUPREME, BELIEVING SHE CAN FORESTALL THE COMING CONFLICT, HAS BANISHED THE **MIDNIGHT SUNS** TO THE DARK DIMENSION. THE ONLY HOPE FOR THEIR RETURN IS THE SORCERER SUPREME OF YET ANOTHER REALITY—**TONY STARK**—WHO HAS FASHIONED MAGICAL SUITS OF ARMOR SO THEY CAN TAKE THE FIGHT DIRECTLY TO VALTORR, THE EVIL ENTITY PLANNING THE ATTACK ON EARTH. MEANWHILE, **AGATHA HARKNESS** AND ZOE HAVE FOUND THE BLACK MIRROR, VALTORR'S LIFELINE TO OUR UNIVERSE, AND THEY INTENDED TO DESTROY IT. HOWEVER, THEY WERE SHOCKED TO DISCOVER AGATHA'S OLD FRIEND CORINA—NOW KNOWN AS **KORROSION**—WAS THE REAL VILLAIN BEHIND THE ATTACK...AND SHE'D ALREADY KICKED OFF THE APOCALYPSE!

MIDNIGHT SUNS

PART 5

"SMOKE AND MIRRORS"

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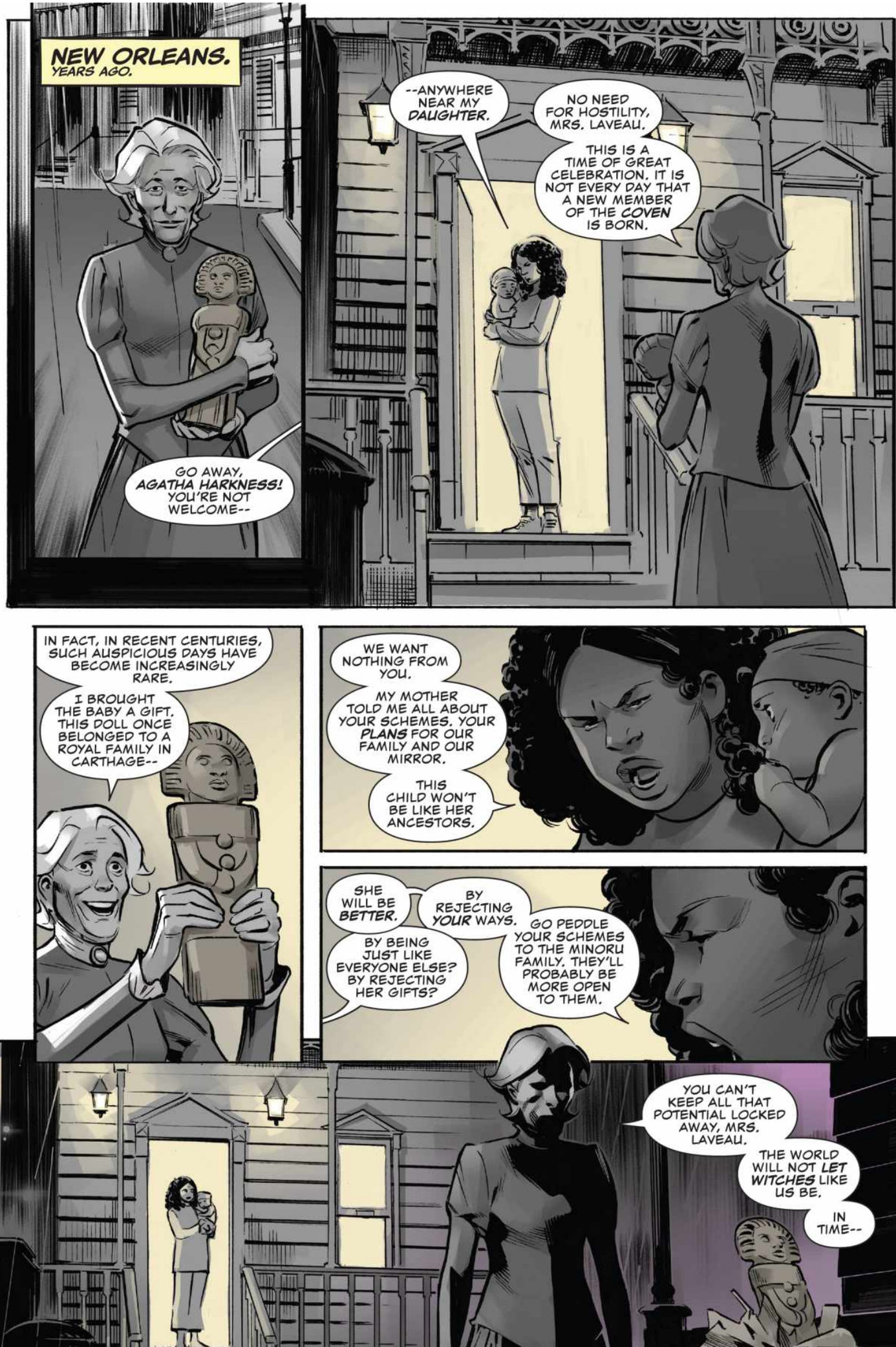

NEW ORLEANS.
YEARS AGO.
GO AWAY, AGATHA HARKNESS! YOU'RE NOT WELCOME--
--ANYWHERE NEAR MY DAUGHTER.
NO NEED FOR HOSTILITY, MRS. LAVEAU.
THIS IS A TIME OF GREAT CELEBRATION. IT IS NOT EVERY DAY THAT A NEW MEMBER OF THE COVEN IS BORN.
IN FACT, IN RECENT CENTURIES, SUCH AUSPICIOUS DAYS HAVE BECOME INCREASINGLY RARE.
I BROUGHT THE BABY A GIFT. THIS DOLL ONCE BELONGED TO A ROYAL FAMILY IN CARTHAGE--
WE WANT NOTHING FROM YOU.
MY MOTHER TOLD ME ALL ABOUT YOUR SCHEMES. YOUR PLANS FOR OUR FAMILY AND OUR MIRROR.
THIS CHILD WON'T BE LIKE HER ANCESTORS.
SHE WILL BE BETTER.
BY BEING JUST LIKE EVERYONE ELSE? BY REJECTING HER GIFTS?
BY REJECTING YOUR WAYS.
GO PEDDLE YOUR SCHEMES TO THE MINORU FAMILY. THEY'LL PROBABLY BE MORE OPEN TO THEM.
YOU CAN'T KEEP ALL THAT POTENTIAL LOCKED AWAY, MRS. LAVEAU.
THE WORLD WILL NOT LET WITCHES LIKE US BE.
IN TIME--

"--ZOE WILL SEEK ME OUT."
EARTH. NOW.
IT'S ALL MY FAULT.
I TRIED SO HARD, BUT I COULDN'T ESCAPE MY FAMILY'S LEGACY.
WE...WE HAVE ALL MADE MISTAKES.
BUT NOW IS NOT THE TIME TO GIVE UP.
TIME? IT IS NOT ON YOUR SIDE, OLD "FRIEND."
WHOOOM
I'VE GROWN TOO POWERFUL FOR YOU TO STOP ME--

"--AND THERE IS NO ONE LEFT TO HELP YOU."
VALTORR'S DIMENSION.
SOMETHING BAD IS ALREADY HAPPENING...ON EARTH...
MY SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE IS SCREECHING IN MY HEAD... IT'S BEING PULLED IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS...AS IF TWO POSSIBLE TIMELINES ARE UNFOLDING AT ONCE.
WELL, THEN WE'D BETTER FIND A WAY OUT OF THIS DAMN PLACE...FAST.
THAT'S EASIER SAID THAN DONE, BLADE. CAN'T TELEPORT US HOME AS LONG AS CLEA'S SPELL IS IN PLACE.
EVEN IF WE COULD GET OUT OF HERE, MAGIK...THERE MAY BE NOWHERE TO GO!
IF THAT VISION WAS ACCURATE, THEN THE APOCALYPSE WE ALL SAW IS STARTING RIGHT NOW.
BARP
THINGS AIN'T EXACTLY GREAT HERE EITHER, NICO.
SEEMS LIKE THESE MAGICAL COSTUMES PROTECTING US FROM THE CORROSIVE VAPORS IN THIS PLACE COME WITH AN EXPIRATION DATE.
AND I'M THE ONLY ONE WITH A HEALING FACTOR.
THE CONNECTION... IT IS SO PAINFUL... SO POWERFUL.
I...I THINK THAT OTHER VERSION OF ME... JUST DIED.
WAIT...COULD THIS MEAN ANOTHER REALITY, KUSHALA?
YOU WERE A SORCERER SUPREME ONCE, WEREN'T YOU?
IT'S RISKY, BUT IT COULD

EARTH.
:GASP!:
I AM SORRY IT HAS TO END THIS WAY.
BUT THERE IS NO PLACE FOR ANY OF YOU IN THE WORLD I AM BUILDING FROM THE ASHES OF THIS ONE. MY NEW COVEN WILL BE...STRONGER.
WHO DARES?!
KERRAWNGGG
I SUPPOSE I DO.

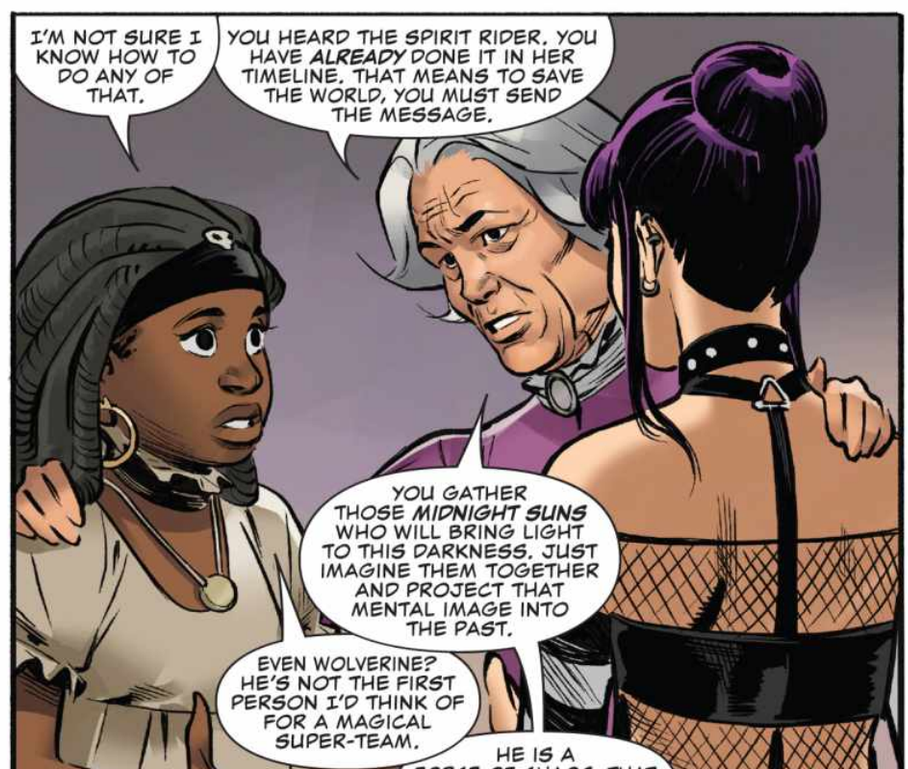
THE SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE WAS RIGHT... WE'RE AT SOME SORT OF DIVERGENCE POINT IN OUR TIMELINE. BUT WHAT TO DO--?
WE SAW YOUR VISION, ZOE.
WE ARE THE "MIDNIGHT SUNS" YOU PROPHESIZED.
MY VISION?!
LISTEN, I'M THE SPIRIT RIDER. BUT NOT THE ONE YOU KNOW.
I REACHED ACROSS THE BARRIER BETWEEN REALITIES, INHABITING THIS BODY IN THE PROCESS. IN OUR REALITY, MAGIK, BLADE, WOLVERINE, NICO...A DIFFERENT VERSION OF YOU... AND I ARE READY TO JOIN THIS FIGHT. BUT WE ARE TRAPPED IN VALTORR'S REALM.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND... YOU DIDN'T SEND THAT VISION? THAT IS WHAT SPURRED US ON THIS JOUR--
THAT... BLOW WILL BE THE LAST YOU WILL EVER STRIKE...
THERE ISN'T MUCH TIME! ZOE, YOU MUST SEND YOUR VISION TO SUMMON US HE--
NOOOOO!
NO ONE CAN STOP ME! I DID THIS! ALL OF IT!
WHO IS THE WEAK ONE NOW, AGATHA?
THE SPIRIT RIDER HAS GIVEN US A CHANCE...AND SHE HAS GIVEN ME
WHILE KORROSION IS DISTRACTED, WE HAVE TO PROCEED

THIS BLACK MIRROR IS YOUR BIRTHRIGHT, ZOE.
IT IS A POWERFUL PRISM THAT CAN FOCUS MAGIC POWER.
YEAH, I KIND OF NOTICED IT CAUSING THE END OF THE WORLD.
BUT THERE IS SO MUCH MORE IT CAN DO.

IT WAS BECAUSE OF BOTH OF YOU THAT I TOOK THE TEACHING POST AT STRANGE ACADEMY.
I'LL ADMIT I SAW THE POTENTIAL TO TRAIN A NEW COVEN.

BUT YOU TAUGHT ME SOMETHING. THAT THE FUTURE DOESN'T NEED TO BE TETHERED TO THE PAST.
NOW PAY ATTENTION TO MY LESSON: THIS MIRROR CAN PROJECT A BEAM THROUGH SPACE AND TIME--
--THE SPIRIT RIDER'S PRESENCE PROVED IT.

THAT MEANS ZOE CAN USE IT TO SEND A MESSAGE INTO THE PAST...A WARNING THAT ANYONE ATTUNED TO MAGIC WILL PICK UP!
WE CAN LET THEM KNOW EXACTLY WHEN IT'S GOING TO HAPPEN TOO!


I'M NOT SURE I KNOW HOW TO DO ANY OF THAT.
YOU HEARD THE SPIRIT RIDER. YOU HAVE ALREADY DONE IT IN HER TIMELINE. THAT MEANS TO SAVE THE WORLD, YOU MUST SEND THE MESSAGE.
YOU GATHER THOSE MIDNIGHT SUNS WHO WILL BRING LIGHT TO THIS DARKNESS. JUST IMAGINE THEM TOGETHER AND PROJECT THAT MENTAL IMAGE INTO THE PAST.
EVEN WOLVERINE? HE'S NOT THE FIRST PERSON I'D THINK OF FOR A MAGICAL SUPER-TEAM.
HE IS A

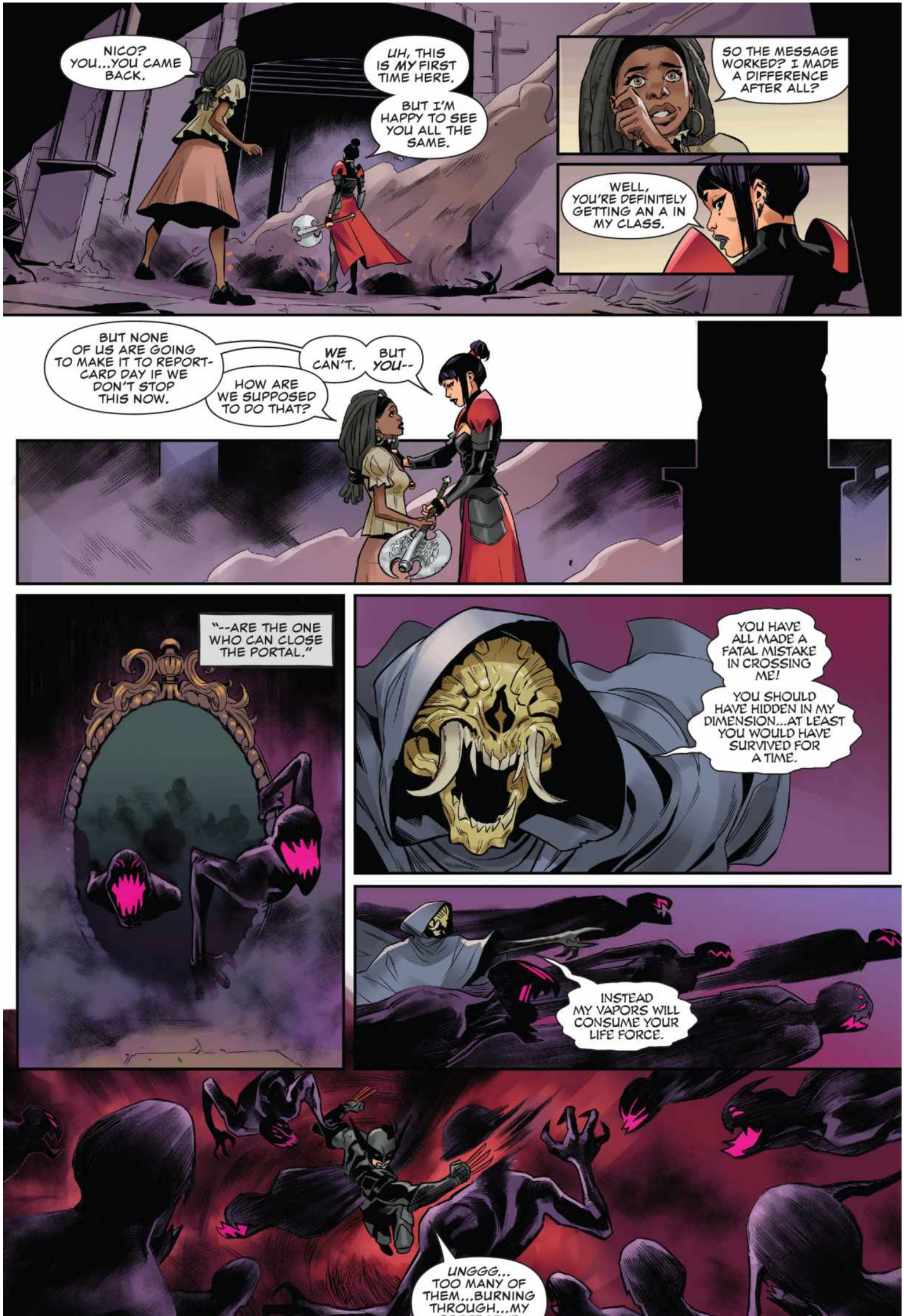
IF THE MIDNIGHT SUNS ARE EXTINGUISHED HERE...ALL IS LOST...
AN APOCALYPSE...IS COMING.
IT CAN'T BE.
NOT AGAIN.
"DO NOT TRUST HER...SHE IS THE BRINGER OF RUIN."
BRINGER OF RUIN WAS THE NAME... OH, CORINA, WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?
AND WHAT MUST I BE WILLING TO DO TO STOP

EARTH.
THREE HOURS AGO.
NOW, CHILD, IT IS TIME TO EMBRACE YOUR DESTINY.
TO WIPE ALL LIFE AWAY AND BEGIN ANEW.
WHOOOOSH
SOON I WILL ACHIEVE WHAT YOU AND THE OTHERS COULD NOT!
I WOULD NOT COUNT ON THAT JUST YET.
WHAT THE--?

LOOKS LIKE THE PORTAL BACK TO EARTH OPENED!
JUST IN TIME FOR THE END OF THE WORLD.
YOU THINK THIS WILL STOP ME?
I AM KORROSION, VANQUISHER OF VALTORR...LORD OF THE VALE OF VAPORR...

THAT IS FOR KILLING ME...TWICE!
WHAM
UUUUUNN.
SOMEONE WANT TO EXPLAIN TO ME HOW WE MADE IT BACK HERE?
NOT THAT I'M COMPLAINING, BUT I THOUGHT WE WERE TRAPPED IN VALTORR'S REALM!
IT'S QUITE SIMPLE, REALLY.
ZOE'S VISION CREATED A BRANCH IN THE TIMELINE FOR US IN WHICH WE REACTED BY TEAMING UP. ONCE KUSHALA MADE HER CONNECTION WITH THAT OTHER, DEADER VERSION OF HERSELF, SHE COULD USE HER "RIDE THE SPIRIT" POWER TO OPEN A RIFT BETWEEN THESE REALITIES--
--AND BRING US ALONG WITH HER.
SLASSSHH
SIMPLE?! FIRST MAGIC AND NOW ALTERNATE TIMELINES...
...THIS CRAP IS GIVING ME A HEADACHE THAT NOT EVEN A HEALING FACTOR CAN FIX.
OH, QUIT WHINING, LOGAN--
SWISH
SHUNK
--I CAN TELEPORT AGAIN, AND YOUR MAGICAL COSTUME--
SLLLICCC
--GIVES YOUR CLAWS THE POWER TO STRIKE AT THESE INTANGIBLE VAPOR CREATURES.
THIS GIVES US A SMALL CHANCE...
...AND A CHANCE IS ALL WE EVER NEED.
SHUNK
NOT MUCH I CAN DO TO HELP AGAINST THESE THINGS WITHOUT THE STAFF OF ONE--
THEN GO TO ZOE LAVEAU, KEEP HER SAFE.
I'LL... I'LL DO MY BEST.
I KNOW YOU WILL.
AS APOCALYPSES GO, THIS IS KIND OF FUN.
FWOOOSHHH

SWISH
WHOA, THAT WAS CLOSE. TOO CLOSE.
AAAAHHHH!
ᚠᛖᚱᛒᚾᚱᛖ ᛋᚲᚲ ᛇᛟᛗᛗᚾᚦᚠᛟ ᛟᛋᛋᛁ ᚺᛈᚷᛒᚠᛈᚱᛖ.
THANKS FOR THE LOANER, NICO--
--BUT IT LOOKS LIKE YOU COULD USE THIS BACK!
WHOOSH
WHUMP
NOT QUITE MY MAGIC STAFF...BUT IT'LL DO!
SHUNK


NICO? YOU...YOU CAME BACK.
UH, THIS IS MY FIRST TIME HERE.
BUT I'M HAPPY TO SEE YOU ALL THE SAME.
SO THE MESSAGE WORKED? I MADE A DIFFERENCE AFTER ALL?
WELL, YOU'RE DEFINITELY GETTING AN A IN MY CLASS.
BUT NONE OF US ARE GOING TO MAKE IT TO REPORT-CARD DAY IF WE DON'T STOP THIS NOW.
HOW ARE WE SUPPOSED TO DO THAT?
WE CAN'T.
BUT YOU--
"--ARE THE ONE WHO CAN CLOSE THE PORTAL."
YOU HAVE ALL MADE A FATAL MISTAKE IN CROSSING ME!
YOU SHOULD HAVE HIDDEN IN MY DIMENSION...AT LEAST YOU WOULD HAVE SURVIVED FOR A TIME.
INSTEAD MY VAPORS WILL CONSUME YOUR LIFE FORCE.
UNGGG... TOO MANY OF THEM...BURNING THROUGH...MY

IMPOSSIBLE! NO MERE MORTAL COULD HAVE PENETRATED MY MYSTICAL DEFENSES!
YOU... UNDERESTIMATE... JUST...HOW... MUCH--
--THIS... MAGIC #%&$... PISSES ME OFF!
KERRANNGG
AAAAARRGGHHHH!
NOW! WHILE SHE'S WOUNDED... ATTACK!
GAAAAHHH!
SLAASSHHH
OOOOF!
YOU WILL NOT STOP ME!
WHOOOSSHH
JUST... NEED TO REGROUP...
VICTORY... IS...IS STILL

I..I AM TOO POWERFUL TO BE DEFEATED BY A BAND OF COSTUMED MISFITS.
OH, CORINA...I'M SORRY THINGS TURNED OUT THIS WAY...
ALL THOSE YEARS OF STEALING MAGIC FROM VALTORR, AND YOU CAN BARELY CONTROL IT.
MAGIC ALWAYS COMES WITH A COST.
I...I AM JUST DOING WHAT YOU ONCE PROMISED WE WOULD DO TOGETHER.
WITH ALL THIS POWER I HAVE, WE COULD--
HAD, MY DEAR.
YOU SUFFERED SUCH DARKNESS TO STEAL SUCH TERRIBLE POWER...AND THE ONLY USE YOU COULD THINK OF WAS INFLICTING THAT DARKNESS ON OTHERS?
AAAAAHHHHH!
SHUNK
THIS POWER BELONGS IN THE HANDS OF SOMEONE MORE RESPONSIBLE.
LIKE ME.
ZOE, ONLY YOU CAN DESTROY THE GATEWAY THAT IS KEEPING THE VAPOR CREATURES IN OUR WORLD.
THE MIRROR IS YOUR FAMILY'S BIRTHRIGHT. IT WILL RESPOND TO YOU.
IN THAT CASE--
--LET IT RESPOND TO THIS!

CRASHHHH
SO...MUCH... POWER...CAN'T... CONTAIN...IT... ALL...
NOOOOOOOO...
FWOOOOOMMM
NEVER APPRECIATED SUNGLASSES MORE THAN I DO RIGHT NOW.

PROFESSOR HARKNESS?

SHE'S... GONE. SO IS KORROSION.
BUT THE REST OF THE WORLD IS STILL HERE.

WHAT...WHAT HAS HAPPENED HERE?

YOU'RE LATE, "SORCERER SUPREME."
BUT DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT... THE MIDNIGHT SUNS HANDLED THE SITUATION.
UH, WHO TOOK CARE OF WHAT EXACTLY?

NOT A BIG FAN OF ANCIENT CASTLES IN MY LINE OF WORK--
--BUT THIS ONE IS NOT TOO SHABBY.
THIS WOULD MAKE A HELLUVA TEAM BASE...
DID YOU SAY SOMETHING?
THE HAVEN.
LATER.
NOTHING.
SO, THAT'S IT? END OF DAYS AVERTED?
YEAH, DIDN'T YOU NOTICE THAT MAGICAL BLAST TOOK OUT THE BIG BAD?
ILLYANA, I'VE BEEN AROUND LONG ENOUGH TO KNOW THAT IF YOU DON'T SEE A BODY--
"--THERE IS USUALLY A BAD REASON."
UHHHH...
THEY THINK THEY WON.
~~VALTORR'S~~ KORROSION'S REALM
THEY THINK KORROSION IS DEFEATED...
...BUT I'LL SHOW THEM ALL.
I'LL SHOW HER.

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? I MEAN... RELATIVELY SPEAKING.
PROFESSOR HARKNESS DIED SAVING US--
SHE DIED BELIEVING IN ME. I JUST HOPE I CAN BE WORTHY.
WHAP
HEY!
HOW ABOUT WE FORGET ABOUT ALL THAT BEING-DESCENDANTS-OF-BAD-GUYS LEGACY STUFF--
--AND WE CONCENTRATE ON FINDING OUR OWN PATHS FORWARD?
"THAT, MY CHILD--"

STRANGE ACADEMY,
NEW ORLEANS.
--IS SAGE ADVICE--

--WE MUST LEAVE THE PAST BEHIND US...AND FOCUS ON THE *FUTURE.*
A FUTURE THAT I, *AGATHA HARKNESS,* WILL MAKE.

ZONE